

### REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Office Action of November 6, 2003 (hereinafter "Office Action").

Applicants especially appreciate the indication that dependent Claim 6 recites patentable subject matter. In response, to advance prosecution and to facilitate an early allowance of the present application, Applicants have amended Claim 1 to include the recitations of Claim 6, which has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

It is not believed that an extension of time and/or additional fee(s)-including fees for net addition of claims-are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. In the event, however, that an extension of time is necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such an extension is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a). Any additional fees believed to be due in connection with this paper may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-0220.

Respectfully submitted,

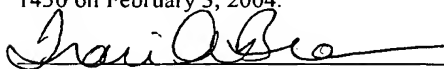


D. Scott Moore  
Registration No. 42,011

**Customer No. 20792**  
Myers Bigel Sibley & Sajovec  
P. O. Box 37428  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27627  
Telephone: (919) 854-1400  
Facsimile: (919) 854-1401

### CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on February 3, 2004.

  
Traci A. Brown